

## Norman Kretzmann on Aquinas's attribution of will and of freedom to create to God

JOHN F. WIPPEL

*School of Philosophy, The Catholic University of America, 620 Michigan Avenue, Washington DC 20064*

**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to discuss Norman Kretzmann's account of Aquinas's discussion of will in God. According to Kretzmann, Aquinas's reasoning seems to leave no place for choice on God's part, since, on Aquinas's account, God is not free not to will Himself. And so this leads to the problem about God's willing things other than Himself. On this, Kretzmann finds serious problems with Thomas's position. Kretzmann argues that Aquinas should have drawn necessitarian conclusions from his account of divine will. Moreover, in light of one reading of *De veritate*, q. 24, a. 3, but one not accepted by the Leonine edition, Kretzmann also maintains that Aquinas practically conceded this necessitarian view of God's creative activity in that text. My purpose will be, after presenting Kretzmann's presentation and defence of Aquinas's attribution of will to God, to examine critically his claim that Thomas should have concluded that God is not free not to create, and to determine whether a stronger argument can be made in support of Aquinas's position in light of his texts.

In chapter 6 of *The Metaphysics of Creation* Norman Kretzmann comments that the natural theology he has been investigating in Aquinas's *Summa Contra Gentiles*, I [hereafter SCG], so far, i.e. through ch. 43, has attempted to show that there must be 'a necessarily unique, absolutely simple being that constitutes the ultimate explanation of everything' (169). Moreover, this natural theology has attempted to show that this being can be correctly characterized by us in various ways, including our naming it 'perfectly good' and 'infinitely powerful'. Kretzmann comments that, at least in his judgement, most philosophers would agree that if Aquinas's natural theology has successfully established these points, it has also shown that there is a God. But, he also comments here, most traditional theists would require more than the findings of natural theology which he has just mentioned before they would agree that it has been shown that God exists.

Aquinas himself would not necessarily share Kretzmann's view concerning this, for he seems to think that his proof that a unique self-subsisting being (*esse subsistens*) exists is a proof for the existence of God (see, for instance, *De ente et essentia*, ch. 4).<sup>1</sup> Even so, it must be granted to Kretzmann that Aquinas goes on in *SCG*, I, ch. 44 to begin arguing for the presence of 'personifying' attributes in God. And among these Kretzmann finds Aquinas rightly selecting as the first and most fundamental personifying attribute 'mind', or what Thomas will usually refer to as 'intellect'. In the remainder of his chapter 6, Kretzmann comments on Aquinas's argumentation for the presence of intellect in God as following from divine perfection (already established in ch. 28). Kretzmann very thoroughly analyses one of the arguments from perfection presented in *SCG*, I, ch. 44 (see 184–196), and includes his own recast version. In doing so, he also exhibits one of the finest characteristics of this valuable book – careful philosophical analysis of particular arguments.

With this completed, Kretzmann moves on in his chapter 7 to consider Aquinas's reasons for assigning will to God. He opens this chapter by noting that if the presence of intellect is necessary for personhood, something more than this also seems to be required, namely, will (197). But Kretzmann does not find Thomas basing his attribution of will to God on divine perfection, as he had done in the case of intellect. Kretzmann suggests that this may be because Aquinas's account of will leaves it 'looking like an appendage to intellect, not a specific perfection in its own right' (199).

Kretzmann begins by offering some observations about Aquinas's conception of will in general. Thomas regards will as a species of *appetitus*, a Latin term for which Kretzmann can find no perfect single English term, and for which he will simply use the term 'appetite' as a rough equivalent (199–200). While 'wanting' might capture Aquinas's meaning when he refers to certain kinds of appetite (in rational and non-rational animals), even this will apply only if one realizes that 'wanting' something is compatible with 'having' it.

But for Thomas (*SCG*, I, ch. 37) appetite is much more general than this. Indeed, following Aristotle (*Ethics*, I, ch. 9 [1094a 2–3]), Thomas holds that the good is that which all things 'have an appetite for'. As Kretzmann points out, Aquinas's defence of a universal appetite for good follows from the transcendental character of goodness (200). As Kretzmann also points out, because Thomas views a thing's goodness as its capacity to 'elicit appetite', it operates as a final cause (201). Thomas applies this notion of appetite at three distinct levels – natural appetite (as realized in things that lack cognition), sensitive appetite (as realized in entities equipped with sensory cognition), and intellectual or rational appetite (will). See *SCG* II, ch. 47. As Thomas explains in *Summa Theologiae* Ia, 59, 1, [hereafter *ST*] regarding the last mentioned case, intellectual beings are inclined toward goodness itself considered universally. And this inclination is known as will.

With this background in mind, Kretzmann turns to Aquinas's particular arguments for attributing will to God. In *SCG*, I, ch. 72, Thomas presents eight arguments to support this, seven of which, Kretzmann points out, make use in some way of God's intellectivity. Of these he notes that the first does so most simply and directly. But he expresses some concern about the validity of its second sentence: 'For since an intellectually cognized good is the proper object of volition (*voluntatis*), an intellectually cognized good, considered just as such, must be what is willed.'<sup>2</sup> From this, the argument continues, something is an object of intellect in relation to that which knows intellectually. Therefore, that which has intellectual knowledge of what is good must itself be volitional. And since God has intellectual knowledge of what is good, God is volitional. Kretzmann's concern is that while this may show that intellection is a necessary condition for being volitional, it may not show that it is a sufficient condition. But after fuller examination of Aquinas's account of the nature of will, Kretzmann expresses himself satisfied by the argument.

Kretzmann then singles out the third argument from this same ch. 72 which, as he points out, brings out more clearly Aquinas's view that the universal appetite for good is a fundamental, all pervasive feature of reality, which manifests itself differently in accord with the kind or level of being under consideration. As Kretzmann sums up this point (207), upon the recognition of this view 'intellect can be seen to be not only necessary but also sufficient for will, when will is considered initially as simply the intellectual form of the universal appetite'.

Kretzmann notes that only one of the eight arguments offered in ch. 72 for the presence of will in God is completely free from considerations of intellect. After mentioning the simplicity and strength of this argument, Kretzmann examines it because it also serves to raise an important issue concerning volition in general and God's will in particular (208). In Kretzmann's translation:

What is free is what is by reason of itself [*Liberum est quod sui causa est*], and so what is free has the essential nature of what is *per se*. Now will is what primarily has freedom where acting is concerned, for a person is said to perform freely an action he performs to the extent to which he performs it voluntarily. Therefore, the first agent, with whom acting *per se* is associated most especially, is one to whom it is most especially suited to act through will.

Kretzmann comments that this argument takes as granted the first agent's (God's) freedom in the order of being, or His metaphysical independence, and that this entails that He act voluntarily. But Kretzmann is concerned about its identification of acting freely and acting voluntarily (see the second sentence). He remarks that in light of Thomas's account of will as a faculty whose nature is that of an essential inclination toward a fixed ultimate end – goodness itself considered universally – and his view that particular volitions of subordinate ends are 'informed by what intellect presents to will as good for progressing toward the

ultimate end', God's perseity or absolute independence might be taken as an obstacle to attributing will to Him (208).

In responding to this concern, Kretzmann introduces Aquinas's discussion of the necessary, taken as that which cannot not be (209). In accord with Aristotle's theory of the four causes, Aquinas distinguishes three species of necessity. The first, intrinsic necessity, follows from the intrinsic principles of a being, and may be based on an intrinsic material principle or an intrinsic formal principle (see *ST*, Ia, 82, 1c). A second kind, which is extrinsic, is based on the final cause and is necessity of the end in the sense that without something else a given end cannot be attained. The third kind is also extrinsic, but is based on efficient causation, and is necessity of coercion.

Kretzmann then follows Aquinas in explaining how acting freely can be equated with acting voluntarily by showing how he applies this to human volition. Will, as an instance of the universal appetite for goodness is, explains Kretzmann, naturally necessitated by a formal principle. But this is not incompatible with the will's ability to choose. As an act of will, choice is intellectually motivated, and some motives are subordinated to others. Since, according to Thomas, there is one supreme or ultimate motive – happiness, this ultimate end is an intrinsic, formal, and absolutely necessitating principle of volition (209–210). The objects open to choice are things that are directed toward this ultimate end. In light of this, Kretzmann concludes with Aquinas that while a predetermined ultimate end is a necessary but not a sufficient determinant for volition of a subordinate end, the fact that the ultimate end is predetermined is not incompatible with freedom of choice regarding things directed toward the ultimate end.

As Kretzmann also explains, not even Aquinas's view that the will depends upon the intellect in the act of choice eliminates freedom of choice. Will can be moved by intellect in the way an agent is moved by an end. And so the only kind of necessity involved in the intellect's presentation of a given particular end with reference to the ultimate end is based on necessity of the end, namely, that the particular end be a suitable means to that end. But the will can reject any such subordinate good that is presented to it by the intellect as a contribution to its achieving (or enjoying) its ultimate end. And this ability on the part of the will rests on Aquinas's view that the faculty of the will moves the faculty of the intellect as an agent or efficient cause, so that the intellect will present this particular subordinate good to the will rather than some other. Accordingly, Thomas holds that the intellect moves the will in the manner of a final cause, while the will moves the intellect as an efficient and moving cause. In sum, Kretzmann concludes that Aquinas's general conception of will is at least compatible with his argumentation for the presence of will in God both as following from the presence of intellect in God, and on the basis of God's absolute independence (212).

In a section of chapter 7 entitled 'Determinate, static, choiceless volition in God', Kretzmann explains that since we usually associate freedom with the will's

act of choosing, he has been focusing on choice in showing how this can be reconciled with Aquinas's views on necessity. Kretzmann comments that in Aquinas's initial argumentation for will in God he has not concentrated on freedom of choice, and grants that there are good reasons for this; for in the seventeen chapters Aquinas devotes to will in God, there is a gradual development in which his attribution of freedom of choice to God emerges clearly at the very end, i.e., in ch. 88.

Kretzmann also points out that we usually take volition as referring to our acquiring or achieving something we do not yet already have. Nonetheless, he turns to our reflection on ourselves as persons to illustrate another kind of willing or wanting, i.e., a *static* kind of appetite or of 'wanting' what we already have (213). Kretzmann indicates that an object of static volition can at least be recognized as chosen *counterfactually*, i.e., as something we would choose to have if the occasion to choose it should arise. But, static volition of itself involves no actual choosing.

Kretzmann contrasts this with *dynamic* volition, i.e., our willing to have what we recognize intellectually as good but do not yet possess. He cites from Aquinas's *De veritate*, q. 23. 1. ad 8 to show that Thomas himself was aware of the difference between the two. Given this distinction, Kretzmann judges it reasonable that, until this point, Aquinas's arguments for will in God have had to do with static determinate volition of that which is in no way extrinsic to Him (215). The proper object of this divine static volition is perfect goodness itself, or God Himself. Thus God necessarily wills His own being (*esse*) according to SCG, I, ch. 80, and, adds Kretzmann, naturally and necessarily enjoys His being (216). Therefore God is not free not to will His own being and goodness. Even so, while this willing involves no choice, for Aquinas it does not exclude every kind of freedom. In *De veritate*, q. 23, 4c he writes that while the divine will does will God's own goodness necessarily, this is not a necessity of coercion but the necessity of natural order, which is not incompatible with freedom. Kretzmann comments that while 'this freedom compatible with natural order rules out any real alternatives and is quite clearly and explicitly not freedom of choice, even an incompatibilist libertarian can, and should, acknowledge it as a species of freedom' (217). And he suggests that it can be referred to as willingness, or as counterfactual choice.

But at this point Kretzmann's difficulties with Aquinas's discussion of will in God begin. In the section of chapter 7 entitled 'God's willing of other things', Kretzmann recalls that at the beginning of this chapter he had singled out will in addition to intellect as necessary to justify one's ascribing personhood to God. Among the characteristics of person he had noted that such entities are conscious, self-directed, responsible free agents, capable of personifying attitudes and relationships with other entities of this sort. But, Kretzmann now comments, until this point Aquinas's arguments for will in God have not justified ascribing choice and interpersonal relationships to God (218).

Kretzmann indicates that the main reason why these two components have not yet appeared is that Thomas has excluded choice from God's willing of His own essence; for God necessarily wills His being and His goodness. But if one were to stop here, complains Kretzmann, one would be left with a divine will very unlike the will of a human person, and much more like a purely natural appetite. Therefore, he continues, if personifying choice is to be found in divine volition, it must be in God's willing of things other than Himself. But Kretzmann finds Aquinas's way of introducing this kind of willing 'unpromising' (218).

First of all, Kretzmann notes that in ch. 75 Aquinas's theory of volition requires him to hold that in willing himself, God wills other things. In a first argument in support of this, Thomas reasons that it belongs to anyone who wills an end principally to will things that are directed toward that end and to will them because of that end. But as Thomas has shown in the preceding ch. 74 to some extent, God is the ultimate end of other things. Therefore, by reason of the fact that He wills Himself to be, He also wills other things that are ordered to Him as their end (219). But, comments Kretzmann, it remains to be seen how things other than God could be willed by Him because they are 'directed toward the end that is God himself'.

Kretzmann singles out two problems in this account. First, because God wills other things in willing Himself, and because He wills himself necessarily, it seems to follow that He wills other things necessarily. Second, to say that God wills all other things seems to threaten absolute divine simplicity. Kretzmann notes that Thomas immediately considers the second difficulty, but in such a way as to make the first difficulty even greater.

Aquinas argues (SCG, I, ch. 76) that God wills Himself and other things in a single act of His will. Thus, in what Kretzmann regards as Thomas's most effective argument in support of this, he reasons that what is perfectly known and desired is known and desired according to the full extent of its power. But the power of an end consists not only in its being desired in itself, but also in that other things become appetible because of it. One who perfectly desires an end desires it in both ways. God, as an all-perfect being, cannot will Himself without doing so perfectly. Therefore, in every such act He wills himself absolutely, and other things for His own sake ('on account of himself' in Kretzmann's translation of *propter se*). But Thomas has shown, in ch. 75, that God does not will things other than Himself except insofar as He wills himself. Therefore, He wills Himself and other things by one and the same act of will.

While Kretzmann does not challenge this as a defence of divine simplicity, he recalls that Thomas has already argued that this single act of God's will is necessary with respect to its primary object – God Himself. How then, he asks, can an act that is identical with that act of will be an act of choice (220)? As he observes, Aquinas himself recognizes the difficulty in ch. 81, where he writes that if the divine willing of the divine goodness and the divine being is

necessary, it might seem to someone that the divine willing of other things is also necessary.

In the next section of his chapter ('Freedom of choice and motives for choosing'), Kretzmann acknowledges that in the very same context (ch. 81), Aquinas states that for those who correctly view the matter, it is clear that God's willing of things other than Himself is not necessitated (220). But Kretzmann is not persuaded by Aquinas's efforts to establish this. Kretzmann comments that Thomas's understanding of the 'right way' to consider this can seem suspiciously simple, and quotes from ch. 88 to illustrate. Here Aquinas reasons that because God wills himself as the end and other things as ordered to that end, with respect to himself he has volition only, but with respect to other things he has selection (*electionem*). But selection is always realized by free choice. Therefore God must have free choice (ch. 88, 'Item').

While Kretzmann grants the plausibility of this approach when applied to Aquinas's general account of (human) choice where one selects a means to a pre-determined end, he finds it unacceptable in the case of an omnipotent agent for whom nothing else can serve as a means. Presumably by this somewhat puzzling remark Kretzmann wants us to understand 'as a means for God to achieve his end'. For he does say that 'nothing else could make any contribution to eternally absolute perfection in any respect' (221). And so he observes, at times Aquinas cites the 'uselessness' of other things in order to show that God did not have to will them. In particular he quotes from ch. 81 again, where Thomas reasons that there is a divine willing of other things insofar as they are ordered to the end of God's own goodness. But a will is not necessarily directed to things that are ordered to an end if the end can exist without those things. Because the divine goodness can exist without other things, and moreover, since nothing is added to the divine goodness by other things, there can be no necessity for God to will other things as a result of His willing His own goodness.

Kretzmann seems to be put off by what he describes as 'such a sweeping declaration of other things' uselessness to God'. In the face of such a 'radical devaluing of all other things' he wonders what it can mean for Aquinas to say that God wills other things on account of himself (ch. 76), or that God's 'being and his goodness is ... for him *the reason for willing (ratio volendi)* other things' as Thomas writes in ch. 80. Kretzmann asks what, on this account, 'could motivate God to choose to create anything at all' (221).

Kretzmann observes that all of Thomas's replies to such questions and his attempts to identify the motive for God's choosing to create involve considerations of divine goodness. But, in Kretzmann's judgement, some of these seem to get no closer to a satisfactory answer. By way of example he cites from ch. 81, where Aquinas explicitly argues that God does not will things other than Himself necessarily. In a second argument in support of this, Aquinas reasons that since a good that is intellectually cognized is the proper object of the will (order reversed

by Kretzmann in his translation, 222), there can be a volition for anything conceived by the intellect in which the nature of the good is preserved. But then without really alerting the reader, Kretzmann omits the remainder of this argument and cites from the beginning of the third: God, by willing His goodness, wills things other than Himself to be insofar as they participate in His goodness. Then again Kretzmann omits the remainder of the third argument and turns to the final part of the chapter, where Thomas explains why God understands things other than Himself necessarily, but does not will them necessarily. Kretzmann quotes Thomas's conclusion to the effect that 'the divine goodness does *not* necessarily require that there *be* other things that are in an ordered relationship toward it as toward their end' (222). But some of the argumentation for this conclusion that Kretzmann omits merits further consideration.

For instance, in the third argument Aquinas reasons that by willing His goodness, God wills things other than Himself insofar as they participate in His goodness. But since the divine goodness is infinite, it can be participated in in an infinity of ways, and in other ways than those in which it is now participated in by creatures. But if it were true that, because God wills His own goodness necessarily, He necessarily wills those things that participate in that goodness, it would follow that He would will that an infinity of creatures exist, which would participate in His goodness in an infinity of ways. But, protests Thomas, it is false to think this, because then all of those things would have to exist. And, that, he writes, is clearly false.

As further evidence of the unconvincing character of Aquinas's attempts to account for God's motivation in creating, Kretzmann cites from ch. 82. There, Aquinas writes that although the divine will is not determined to its effects, it does not follow that God wills none of them. The divine intellect not only understands the divine being, which is identical with the divine goodness, but also other goods. It understands them as certain likenesses of the divine goodness and essence, but not as its principles. (This, of course, is most important for Aquinas's case since it means that the divine goodness does not depend on these created likenesses). And so the divine will tends to them as being in agreement with (*convenientia*) or in Kretzmann's translation 'suitable for' the divine goodness (222).

Kretzmann asks what it is about finite and temporal beings that might make them 'suitable' companions in existence for an absolutely perfect being (222–223). He finds Aquinas's reply (taken from ch. 84) deeply unsatisfactory, according to which God wills other things insofar as they bear His likeness. From these and similar passages, Kretzmann draws the impression that for Aquinas it is 'suitable to God's eternal, perfect pleasure in, and love of, perfect goodness that perfect goodness be surrounded by uncountably many variously incomplete likenesses of itself'. Kretzmann finds this notion 'repugnant' (223).

Kretzmann seems especially exercised over Thomas's use of the expression 'suitable for' (*convenientia*), or as I would translate it, 'in agreement with', the

divine goodness to describe created goods. I am not quite certain why, but would suggest in response that while Aquinas regards all finite goods as participating in the divine goodness and being, this is not intended to denigrate from their value. For Thomas they really are good in themselves, but of course, only to a finite degree since their being is only finite. Not being infinite, they cannot be necessitating objects of the divine intellect or the divine will (as Thomas points out in SCG, II, chs 26, 27).

Having rejected these approaches on Aquinas's part, Kretzmann points to what he regards as a distinct and 'radically preferable explanation' of God's willing of other things in certain texts. As Kretzmann sees it, this approach, a necessitarian explanation, follows from Aquinas's views on God, goodness, creation, and choice. He grants that Aquinas repeatedly and explicitly rejects any such necessitarian explanation, but thinks that he should have held it, was clearly drawn to it, and at times even expresses it, perhaps inadvertently.

In illustration, Kretzmann cites from SCG, I, ch. 87, where Thomas remarks that the end of divine volition is divine goodness and then observes that God's goodness 'is the cause of God's willing; and *it is also the very willing itself*' (italics by Kretzmann, 223). But he does not cite the all-important following sentence: 'There is no cause of God's willing of other things that are willed by God.' As Thomas has pointed out in the previous ch. 86, God wills His goodness as His end, and all other things insofar as they are ordered to that end. Therefore, His goodness is the reason (*ratio*) why He wills other things, but not the cause.

In the final section of his chapter 7, Kretzmann turns to Thomas's use of a Neoplatonic principle which he sometimes attributes to (Pseudo-) Dionysius: 'Goodness is by its very nature diffusive of itself and (thereby) of being' (224). When transliterated from the Latin known to Thomas (*bonum est diffusivum sui [et esse]*), the principle simply states: 'Goodness is diffusive of itself [and of being]'. I mention this because Kretzmann's insertion of 'by its very nature' seems to predetermine its application in a necessitarian direction. As he quite honestly acknowledges, he himself is convinced that this principle 'expresses an important truth about goodness, most obviously about the goodness of agents, which is the only kind at issue here'. He writes that Aquinas's use of this principle on many occasions suggests that he also considers it to be important and true, at least most of the time. Kretzmann grants that Aquinas rejects it on occasion when it is used to support a necessitarian explanation of creation, and quotes from *De potentia* 3. 15, ad 12, where Thomas makes the point that God would not deny his goodness if he did not share his goodness at all 'for it would be no loss at all to goodness if it itself were not shared' (Kretzmann translation, 224).

Even though Kretzmann refers in two footnotes to the important study of this axiom in Neoplatonism and Aquinas by Julien Peghaire,<sup>3</sup> he does not mention Peghaire's major point that Aquinas interprets the principle in terms of final causality rather than in terms of efficient causality, and thereby avoids giving

it a necessitarian implication when he applies it to God. This is all the more surprising because Kretzmann is aware of Thomas's interpreting the principle in terms of final causality, and in two earlier studies he, in fact, rejects this reading as 'counter-intuitive'. While it may indeed be that (when we first read the principle we almost automatically assume that it means that the good efficiently communicates itself), it is Aquinas's interpretation.<sup>4</sup>

But while granting Aquinas's refusal to accept a necessitarian explanation of God's creating other things, Kretzmann finds Thomas at times writing as though he does view God's creating as 'an instance of the natural self-diffusion of goodness' (224). First he cites *SCG*, I, ch. 37 where, as he notes, Aquinas is discussing God's goodness rather than creation:

The sharing (*communicatio*) of being and goodness proceeds from goodness. This is evident, both from the nature of the good and from its definition (*ratione*) ... It is for this reason that the good is said to be diffusive of itself and of being. Now this diffusion is attributable to God, for it was shown above [I.13] that he is the cause of being for other things (Kretzmann's translation).

Kretzmann takes this as meaning that God is perfect goodness, and that goodness is essentially – from its nature and from its definition – diffusive of itself and of being. And so Kretzmann asks: 'Doesn't it follow that the volition to create is a consequence not of God's free choice but of God's very nature?' (224–225). To this I would respond, not from this text. For, as Kretzmann has acknowledged earlier, for Aquinas, the good is that which is an object of appetite. This is its nature and definition. But this indicates finality. And so, for Thomas, this is why the good is said to be diffusive of itself and of being.

As 'more pointed evidence' for his interpretation, Kretzmann next cites *ST*, Ia, 19, 2c:

[Every] agent, to the extent to which it is in actuality and perfect, produces something like itself. That is why this, too, pertains to the essential nature of will – that the good that anyone has he shares with others as much as possible. Moreover, it pertains above all to the divine will, from which every perfection is derived in virtue of a kind of likeness. (Kretzmann's translation)

If one were to read no further, one might agree with Kretzmann that here Thomas seems to be sliding toward necessitarianism. But as Thomas's text continues, we read that natural things communicate their good to other things insofar as they are perfect and that, much more so, it belongs to the divine will to share its goodness with others by way of likeness. And so God wills both Himself to be, and He wills other things. But He wills Himself as the end, and other things as ordered to the end insofar as it is fitting for them to participate in the divine goodness.

Again, we see that Thomas introduces the notion of the end or final causality in accounting for God's reason for creating other things. Moreover, in the immediately following art. 3, he argues that while God wills His own goodness of necessity, He wills other things only insofar as they are ordered to His goodness.

Since God's goodness is perfect and can be realized without other things, because nothing deriving from other things can add to His perfection, it is not necessary for him to will other things (see also ad 2).

Finally, Kretzmann cites from *De veritate*, q. 24, a. 3c:

Speaking absolutely, God of course does not will things [other than himself] necessarily ... because his goodness has no need of things that stand in an ordered relationship to it *except* for purposes of manifestation, which can be carried out appropriately in various ways [Kretzmann notes a textual difficulty here]. *And so there remains for him a free choice for willing this one or that one, just as in our own case.* (Kretzmann translation)

Here, as in his 1983 discussion, Kretzmann follows the faulty Marietti Latin text for this passage. But after it was pointed out to him that it differs from the Leonine critical edition, he reluctantly followed the critical text in his 1991 discussion. This omits the 'except for purposes of manifestation' and simply reads: 'because his goodness has *no need* of things that stand in an ordered relationship to it, and the manifestation of it can be appropriately accomplished in various ways' (Kretzmann translation).<sup>5</sup> This reading, which is the only defensible one on textual grounds, seriously weakens Kretzmann's attempt to find support in it for a necessitarian inclination on Thomas's part.

In light of the above, Kretzmann concludes that there is some warrant here for thinking that Aquinas was sympathetic to what Kretzmann regards as the philosophically correct position. God necessarily wills the being of something other than Himself, but remains free regarding whether to create this or that. In his *The Metaphysics of Creation*, Kretzmann again finds Thomas's efforts in *SCG*, II to defend God's freedom to decide what He creates successful, but repeats his conviction that God necessarily has to create something.<sup>6</sup>

In summing up my reaction to all of this, I will distinguish the textual question from the philosophical issue. As regards Aquinas's texts, when they are read in context, I find no justification in any of those cited by Kretzmann for thinking that Thomas ever maintained that God creates out of necessity. Moreover, whether or not Pseudo-Dionysius himself interpreted the Neoplatonic principle associated with him in necessitarian fashion, Aquinas understands it in terms of final causality rather than efficient causality, and thereby avoids giving it a necessitarian implication when he applies it to God as the supreme good.

As for the philosophical issue, space will not permit me here to explore all of Aquinas's argumentation to show that God is perfectly free to create or not to create. But, Kretzmann's complaint notwithstanding about the 'uselessness' of creatures which he sees implied in it, what is perhaps Aquinas's most fundamental and most metaphysical argument for God's freedom to create strikes me as quite effective. Simply put, there can be no addition to infinite and perfect goodness as realized in God. Therefore, while God may decide to create other beings in order to manifest His goodness in different but always finite ways, no

increase in divine perfection can result therefrom. God perfectly achieves His end, the manifestation of His goodness, with or without creatures. Hence His decision to manifest His goodness by creating is perfectly free.

In sum, therefore, while I gladly acknowledge the many virtues of Kretzmann's volume on *Summa Contra Gentiles I*, including much of its discussion in chapter 7 of will in God, I must differ with some of its historical and philosophical conclusions about Aquinas's views on God's freedom to create or not to create.<sup>7</sup>

### Notes

1. For discussion and secondary literature on the disputed interpretation of this chapter and this argument one may see my *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: from Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 137–150, 404–410.
2. This is Kretzmann's translation (203–204) of the Latin: 'Cum enim bonum intellectum sit obiectum proprium voluntatis, oportet quod bonum intellectum, in quantum huiusmodi, sit volitum': *Summa Contra Gentiles* (Rome: Editio Leonina Manualis, 1934), 69.
3. Julien Peghaire 'L'axiome "Bonum est diffusivum sui" dans le néo-platonisme et le thomisme', *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, 1 (1932), 5–30, esp. 20–25.
4. See Norman Kretzmann 'Goodness, knowledge, and indeterminacy in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas', *Journal of Philosophy*, 80 (1983), 634ff; and *idem* 'A general problem of Creation: why would God create anything at all?', in Scott MacDonald (ed.) *Being and Goodness: The Concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 220.
5. See Kretzmann 'A general problem of Creation', 222. See his explanation in n. 48. For the Latin critical edn (Leonine), see *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia*, vol. 22.3, 687:34–688:45: 'Quod enim in Deo sit liberum arbitrium, hinc apparet quod ipse habet voluntatis suae finem quem naturaliter vult, scilicet suam bonitatem, alia vero omnia vult quasi ordinata in hunc finem, quae quidem absolute loquendo non necessario vult, ut in praecedenti quaestione ostensum est, eo quod bonitas eius his quae ad ipsam ordinantur non indiget, et eius manifestatio convenienter pluribus modis fieri potest'. Note his reference to the previous question (23, 4) where he says he has already shown that God does not necessarily will other things which are ordered to His goodness as their end.
6. See Norman Kretzmann *The Metaphysics of Creation: Aquinas's Natural Theology in Summa contra Gentiles II* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 124 and n. 51; 131–136.
7. See my generally favourable review of this volume in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 37 (1999), 528–530.